



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region Three Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Ave

Bozeman, MT 59718

April 2, 2010

Decision Notice for

GLEN FISHING ACCESS SITE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT Draft Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposed a project to make improvements at Glen Fishing Access Site (FAS). Proposed improvements included building a single-wide concrete boat ramp with a cul-de-sac to facilitate easy turnaround of vehicles and trailers; improving the existing gravel parking lot and clarifying parking areas; reclaiming the existing boat ramp; developing 6 new campsites within the FAS; and replacing existing fire rings and picnic tables at the existing primitive campsites. Campsite improvements are dependent upon cost and available funding.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on February 17, 2010.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken from February 17 through March 22, 2010. The EA was mailed to 126 individuals and groups.

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received fourteen (14) comment letters for the proposed action. Ten comments supported the proposal, three comments opposed the proposal, and one neutral comment pertained to DNRC State Trust Lands.

Comments supporting the proposed project: ten (10) total.

Example of Comment Statements

“I think the improvements at Glen are a good idea, but Pennington is where the boat ramp is a real hazard. How about any kind of boat ramp at High Rd?”

FWP Response: Pennington Bridge FAS lacks a boat ramp because the site is on private land that is leased to FWP, and is not a good location to develop a boat ramp due to river configuration. High Road FAS was also a leased site that is no longer accessible due to

severe erosion. FWP has made efforts to establish a site in this area and landowners contacted by FWP were not willing to sell or lease land needed for the FAS.

“With the completion of the new river bridge, not only is ease of boat launching impaired but a safety issue has been created. Moving the access site further downstream will alleviate both problems.”

“I would be in favor of improving the Glen access site to the river. The existing site is outdated and needs to be replaced. “

“I think that this is a great Idea. We need an improved boat ramp at Glen. It has been difficult to launch a boat for a long time.”

FWP Response: Duly noted.

“Another concern is the amount of water that gets ripping by that access in the spring months: do you think a concrete ramp could hold its ground over time?

In conclusion, I do not oppose this upgrade, but I do feel there are others in greater need of repair in the Big Hole.”

FWP Response: FWP engineers and designers have extensive experience designing boat ramps for various river flows and configuration.

FWP acknowledges that other fishing access sites are in need of improvements, and will continue to work with available resources to improve these sites.

Comments opposing the proposed project: three (3) total.

Example of Comment Statements

“I guess ultimately the question I have is why do you feel that you have to turn a “**FISHING ACCESS SITE**” into an improved campground?”

“The first issue is that I believe improving the site will lead to increased traffic through the site. I am sure this is what FWP hopes for. I believe it will add to the noxious weed problem . . . My second concern is that increase use of the FAS will come at the cost of increased trespassing onto our private land from the FAS.”

“This FAS is fine the way it is. Development would ruin this FAS with overcrowding and parking. Why can’t we secure an access site in the area for just a boat ramp and parking with the money?

FWP Response: Camping is allowed at Glen FAS and the proposed improvements, which do not include additional amenities such as power or sewer services, will protect natural resources by delineating camping sites and restricting motorized vehicle use to designated areas. Site improvements are not intended to increase the number of visitors to the site. FWP is committed to noxious weed management, and will continue to control weeds at Glen FAS. FWP is also committed to being a good neighbor, and works with private landowners to prevent trespassing.

Comments neutral to the proposed project: one (1) total.

Example of Comment Statements

“My only comment relates to State Trust Land Ownership of river bottoms. The section of the Big Hole River in the project area is **not** a section of the river claimed as State Trust Land under current statute and consequently an easement or operating license on Trust lands from DNRC for the boat ramp will **not** be required. Under law, you may choose to apply for an easement now in the event this section of the river is adjudicated in the future but DNRC will not require you to do so.”

FWP Response: Duly noted.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with preferred alternative B, as described in the Glen FAS Proposed Improvements Project Draft Environmental Assessment. In the preferred alternative, FWP proposes building a single-wide concrete boat ramp with a cul-de-sac to facilitate easy turnaround of vehicles and trailers; improving the existing gravel parking lot and clarifying parking areas; reclaiming the existing boat ramp; developing 6 new campsites within the FAS; and replacing existing fire rings and picnic tables at the existing primitive campsites.

Appeal

This project is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the FWP Director (Mr. Joe Maurier, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701) in writing and postmarked within 30 days of the date on this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and lay out how FWP may address the concerns in the appeal. If you have questions regarding this decision notice, please contact Todd Garrett, Fishing Access Site Manager at 406-994-6987.



Gerald Walker
Regional Parks Manager
